



Deactivation furnace passes critical test

The ammunition plant has passed a critical “comprehensive performance test” conducted every five years for the deactivation furnace, thanks to the employees of the environmental management office.

The deactivation furnace provides a more environmentally friendly way to demilitarize munitions that could not be handled at the open detonation grounds, explained Walt Gatsche, environmental engineer.

Using a conveyor belt, the furnace is fed small arms, propellant and other ammunition up to 20 mm projectiles which then detonates or burns the explosive powder in a safe and environmentally controlled and regulated manner, Gatsche said.

The comprehensive performance test validates compliance with national emission standards, establishes limits for operating parameters for the furnace and demonstrates compliance with performance specifications for continuous monitoring systems, said Leah Thomas, the plant’s air program manager.

She explained that the test was a very stringent regulatory process incorporating multiple testing requirements which took about a week to complete.

Successfully passing the test was a result of dedicated people from all over. “We received support from CHPPM, Tooele and from personnel in ammunition operations and in engineering. Camille Washburn led the deactivation furnace’s production crew and both performed an extremely professional job,” Gatsche said.

In order to pass the test, the furnace’s ceramic filters had to be replaced and Gatsche wants everyone to know how well the contracting office responded to this urgent requirement in quickly obtaining the filters from the company located in Sweden.

The deactivation furnace program is coordinated through the Joint Munitions Command.

Briefing—Col. Arnold Montgomery, plant commander, listens to Thadeus Strzelecki , a member of the 1236 furnace deactivation team, as he explains his role in the demilitarization process. (U.S. Army photo by Mark Hughes)